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REAL CHRISTIANS THE SALT OF THE  
EARTH.

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CONSIDERED IN A  
S E R M O N,  
PREACHED AT A  
MONTHLY EXERCISE,

ON ACCOUNT OF  
The Present State of Public Affairs;  
A T  
The Rev<sup>d</sup>. Mr. TOWLES'S MEETING-HOUSE,  
L O N D O N - W A L L,

*March 27, 1782.*

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BY BENJAMIN DAVIES, D.D. K

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LEGAL OFFICERS OF THE  
BARRISTERS

REGISTERED IN A

S E R M O N

TREATISE

MONTHLY EXERCISE

ON ACCOUNT OF

The Public State of Public Affairs;

Meeting House





## To the R E A D E R,

**T**HIS plain Discourse is made public, as a tribute to the Candour of the Reverend and worthy Ministers, who attended the preaching of it. Apprehending the subject to be interesting, and worthy of the serious attention of Professing Christians, they concurred in requesting its publication. It, therefore, appears with very little alteration, excepting that the introduction, which was omitted in the delivery, to avoid taking up too much time, is here inserted. That the Divine Blessing may render it useful, in some degree, in promoting the vital favour of Christian Piety, is the utmost wish the Author can indulge concerning it.

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## S E R M O N, &amp;c.

MATTHEW, V. 13.

*Ye are the Salt of the Earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

THE kingdom of providence is very extensive, and comprehends all the various tribes of Beings, which, as the creatures of his power, are dependent upon God. But the concerns of mankind are, in a more peculiar manner, managed and directed by it. As they occupy the first place in the scale of beings upon earth, it is but reasonable to admit, that their interests should be peculiarly regarded in the dispensations of providence. Yet I apprehend, that the temporal concerns of men are not the principal object

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which the Lord has in view in the government of the world ; but that every dispensation is designed in subserviency to the salvation of his people, as the first of all Divine purposes. The church is God's kingdom, in which he has fixed his throne. To *its* concerns he pays the most peculiar attention ; and *its* prosperity he designs to promote.—The church is the immediate object of his munificence and grace. And though his goodness is more diffusive, than to be entirely confined within its limits ; yet the world shall one day know, that the mercy and forbearance which they now experience, is, in a great measure, the fruit of the love of God to his own people.—Let it not be objected here, “ that the ungodly share more largely in the common bounties of providence, than the children of God :” for, compared with those spiritual blessings which real christians are favoured with, these are but the crumbs which fall from his table, after his children have been supplied.

On the other hand ; when the dispensations of providence wear a frowning aspect, and discover manifest signs of the divine displeasure ; we may justly suppose that they are expressive of divine resentment on account of the corrupt principles and licentious manners which are so prevalent in the world. At the same time, if we attend seriously to the state of things in the church and among the professors of religion, I am much mistaken



taken if the chief occasions of the divine resentment are not to be found among them. The Lord's words to Israel seem to confirm what has now been advanced. Amos iii. 2. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* He severely punished his own people for those sins, which for a long time he overlooked in heathen nations. And universally, the nearer we are related to God, the more offensive will our sins be in his sight, and the more severely will he animadvert upon them. I therefore apprehend, that, upon such an occasion as this, when we are met together to deprecate the judgments of God, and to mourn over the sins which have exposed us to them, the state of the church should employ our peculiar attention; and that it should be our first concern to promote a reformation there. For if the church enjoys the approbation of the Lord, he will bless the world for its sake. And therefore the words which have been read must appear to present us with a very suitable and seasonable subject of devout meditation. *Ye are the salt of the earth, &c.* To illustrate and improve the subject I shall consider,

I. On what accounts are real christians, or the church of God, called *the salt of the earth*?

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II. What

II. What constitutes that gracious favour which renders them the salt of the earth?

III. The sad state and miserable doom of the professors of religion, when they have lost this spiritual favour.

I. On what accounts are real christians, or the church of God, called *the salt of the earth*?

The properties and uses of salt among natural things, are too well known to require a particular description in this place. Who knows not its usefulness in preserving the flesh of animals designed for food, from becoming putrid and offensive, and from perishing; and in adding an agreeable flavour to many things which would otherwise be altogether insipid. The church of God answers a similar purpose, and is the *salt* which seasons and preserves the world. It must indeed be allowed, that the text appears very applicable to the *Apostles* in their sacred character as the *Ministers* of Christ. But I apprehend that it respects them more particularly as *Christians*; the professors of the doctrine of Christ, and the subjects of his grace.

Now, Christians are *the salt of the earth*.

I. Because for their sake the world itself is preserved. The wicked, indeed, entertain very different thoughts concerning them. For in their opinion, they are as *the filth of the*



*the world and the off-scouring of all things.* What a happy place, think they, would this world be, if all the people of God were extirpated out of it? On this principle mankind have acted, in all the persecutions raised against the church of God.—But in this they act contrary to their own interests. For, if the blessed God *exercises forbearance* towards those, who by their sins render themselves the *vessels of wrath*; it is, that his grace might have opportunity to prepare *the vessels of mercy for everlasting glory*. Rom. ix. 22, 23. Sin has subjected this world to a fiery curse. And what is it that has averted this tremendous judgment for so many ages? But that God has a church in the world, his chosen jewels to save from among mankind. And if the period were once arrived which will complete the number of God's redeemed ones, vengeance would no longer sleep; but the sound of the trump of God would usher in the final dissolution of the world. Let not the ungodly therefore, wish the children of God out of the world, for it is for their sake the forbearance of God is continued, and the world itself preserved.

This point is confirmed, by more than one event recorded in sacred history. Though God was greatly incensed by the iniquities of the *old world*, yet forbearance held the hands of vengeance, and kept the deluge from invading the world, until the *Ark was prepared*, to save Noah and his family.—Abominable

minable Sodom likewise was secure while Lot continued in it, and the fiery storm could not descend, until *he* was safe in the retreat appointed for him. How remarkable are the words of the Angel. *Haste thee, escape to Zoar, for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither.* Gen. xix. 22. "Though vengeance be impatient of further delay, yet will it wait till thou art safe. Therefore make haste, that the judgment be no more retarded."

It may be here also observed, that the Lord spares men, and averts threatened judgments, not only because of the *favourable regard* he bears to his own people, but also in answer to the  *fervent prayers* which they offer for them. This is remarkably exemplified in Abraham's intercession for Sodom, which succeeded so far as to obtain a promise, that if but *ten* pious persons were found in it, that corrupt city should be spared for their sake. While the ungodly are pouring out their impious blasphemies, the godly are supplicating mercy in their behalf; and the God of Mercy hears and spares.

2. Real Christians are the salt of the earth, because by their means the world is reformed, and a total corruption of manners is prevented. In this sense, the text coincides with the meaning of our Lord's parable in Mat. xiii. 33. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole*  
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*was leavened.*—The church of Christ consisted then of a very small number; yet this society, so inconsiderable in appearance, is regarded as *the kingdom of heaven*. And by means of it, the influence of the Gospel and of the Grace of God, was in time to be diffused through the whole earth. Its influence has reached far already, and produced wonderful effects in the world. But it will more conspicuously appear, when the *glory of the latter day* will be introduced. The gospel is the grand instrument in the hand of the Spirit of Grace, in converting sinners, and in healing the maladies of the soul. But it is never so likely to answer this important purpose, as when its lustre is manifested in the spirit and life of those who profess it, and who preach it.—In this view Christians are useful to the world;

(1) As by the profession they make of the Gospel of Christ, they hold out a light to mankind, to direct them to the way of truth and holiness. In this respect is the church *the pillar and the ground of the truth*. Tim. iii. 15. Not that the truth borrows its certainty from a supposed infallible testimony of the church; but it stands as a column erected by the Lord, on which he has inscribed his truth, and by which he exhibits it to the view of men: And thus it *holds forth the word of life*. Phil. ii. 16. When christians unite in sacred societies to maintain the pure worship of God, and to encourage the faithful

ful ministration of his word, a lamp is kindled to afford light to all around. Thither may the inquisitive resort, to learn what the Divine Physician has prescribed to heal the maladies of the soul. Yea some, whom mere curiosity, or perhaps, a worse motive has led to drop in, have there met with the Grace which gives life to the soul.

(2). Their holy and unblemished example contributes eminently to convince the world of the reality and importance of religion. To this purpose, Christ addresses his disciples in the verses which succeed the text. *Ye are the light of the world.—Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* Matt. v. 16.—Not the strongest reasoning for the truth and heavenly original of the Gospel; not the clearest and most judicious illustration of its divine contents; nor the most charming and persuasive eloquence, will prevail with men to yield it obedience. It will conduce much more to the accomplishment of this great end, for the professors of the Gospel to be able to shew, that their spirit and conduct are formed after the model of it. Did the world see, that we not only cry down sin in words, but carefully avoid it in our lives; that we not only commend holiness and piety with our lips, but make it our greatest study to cultivate it in heart and life: in a word, were it evident, that we are habitually influenced by

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a regard to the world to come, which we profess to expect; would not this conduce to allure others to enter on the ways of God?

(3). Their social converse and intercourse with others, will contribute to promote the same important end. The grace of God calls out its subjects from all fellowship with the ungodly world, in their vain and sinful practices; but it by no means hinders that intercourse, which is of a civil nature. It is not the duty of christians to lead the sequestered life of *Monks*; for thereby they would be excluded from the discharge of many duties, which reason and religion enjoin. Yet while they keep up some converse with the world, it is their duty, and should be their concern, so to regulate it, that it may promote the interest of religion and piety. If we have families under our direction, we should study to exercise our authority and influence, for the advancement of religion.—If we have friends connected with us by the most endearing ties; let us ever remember, that the truest friendship is a love to their souls.—And as far as we are governed by divine Grace, we shall be concerned, that those we deal with in the world, may be led by our upright and conscientious behaviour, to think more favourably of religion on our account.—In a word, no situation in life can totally exclude a man from contributing his part towards promoting the best interests of his fellow-creatures.

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(4) Their fervent prayers have a peculiar tendency to promote the same end: wherever the Grace of God reigns in the heart, it will inspire it with warm zeal for the Redeemer's Glory, and a tender concern for the souls of men. It is most natural for a christian to pray, *thy kingdom come*. The words of Isaiah will express the sentiments of his heart. Chap. lxii. 1. *For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.*—And he will naturally adopt the pathetic language of Jeremiah. Chap. ix. 1. *Oh! that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!*—And is it not natural to suppose, that a remarkable effusion of the Spirit of God to carry on the work of conversion, will be in the way of a gracious answer to the fervent prayers of Christians? When such a spirit is prevalent in the church, the Lord will cloath his Ministers with zeal, with authority, and with power. And then will *the weapons of their warfare be mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds.* 2 Cor. x. 4.

Thus are christians *the salt of the earth*, as they contribute, under the influence of divine Grace, to reform and purify the principles and manners of men, and in the issue



to render the dispensations of Providence more favourable towards them.

From the whole of this head, we may naturally collect the reason, why the Lord prolongs the life of his people, whom he has called by his Grace. It is not *only* or *principally* that they might acquire a meetness for Glory;—for this his grace might accomplish in them in a very little time. But he spares them as *the salt of the earth*, that he might be favourable to the world for their sake.

We are now led to enquire

II. What constitutes that gracious favour which renders christians the salt of the earth?

This, doubtless, is not to be ascribed to any natural excellency distinguishing them from others. For naturally we are universally corrupt, and disposed rather to increase and confirm the general depravity, than to reform or correct it. It must therefore be derived entirely from that gracious constitution which the blessed God has established for healing the degeneracy of mankind. And since the Gospel is the grand instrument, which the Lord employs for this salutary purpose, in order to our being *the salt of the earth*,

1. Our minds must be well enriched with the genuine principles of the gospel. Had the doctrines of the gospel been matters of

mere speculation, so that our religion should in no degree be affected by the belief or the denial of them; zeal for their truth would be altogether needless. For that only demands our zeal, which lies at the root of that religion, which brings glory to God and terminates in the salvation of the soul. But it is evident, that the Gospel is in this view essential. For the Apostle says, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, unto every one that believeth.* Rom. i. 16. And what is the Gospel, but that precious collection of divine truths, which were taught by Christ himself and his inspired Apostles? This is the blessed remedy, whose virtue is sovereign and efficacious to heal the spiritual disorders of human nature. There is no religion but that of Jesus, that can effect the restoration of a fallen creature. Many expedients have been tried, but they have been tried in vain. Philosophy only made its votaries capable of a folly more specious and refined, than the vulgar were capable of. *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.* Rom. i. 22—And the law though delivered by God himself, *was weak through the flesh*; incapable of producing that saving effect, with which the gospel is attended, on the souls of men. (not that the old dispensation, while it remained in force, wanted efficacy to bring about the renovation and salvation of men. But this is to be ascribed to that Gospel which existed



isted prior to the law, and in subserviency to which the law was given.)—As the gospel affords the only sovereign remedy for the spiritual maladies of human nature, professors cannot be called *the salt of the earth*, unless their religious principles are sound and evangelical. When these are wanting, *the salt hath lost its savour*. That religion which springs not from the influence of Gospel-principles, is a poor, dry, insipid thing, incapable of affording real satisfaction to the man himself, or of being of any advantage to those who are about him.

2. The soundest principles are not sufficient to render us *the salt of the earth*, unless our souls are possessed of the saving grace of God. Hence our Lord says to his disciples, *Have salt in yourselves*. Mark ix. 50. “See to it, that ye have a living principle of divine grace in your souls.” By a *principle of Grace*, we are not to understand any *substance* united to the soul; but the permanent effect of a divine influence upon the soul.—It is undeniably evident, that sin or corruption is a very powerful principle in our nature. It is called *a law in our members*; *the law of sin and death*; *the flesh which must be crucified with its affections and lusts*; *the body of death*; and the *old man*, whose corrupt members must be mortified. Every experienced Christian knows what is intended by these strong metaphors.—Now to subdue this pernicious principle, the grace of  
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God as a living principle is implanted in the heart. And the scriptures are sufficiently explicit, in bearing witness to its existence in the Saints. Christ evidently refers to it in those remarkable words in John iv. 14. *The water that I shall give him shall be in him, a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.*—It is frequently called *the spirit*; as John iii. 6. *That which is born of the spirit is spirit.* And Gal. v. 17. *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other.* This indicates the Spirit of God to be its Author: and that it is its natural tendency to render its subjects spiritual in their disposition.—It is also denominated *a law*; *the law of the mind*; which is expressive of the commanding influence of divine Grace upon a regenerate soul. In a word, it is called a *Divine Nature*. 2 Pet. i. 4. Which implies, that divine Grace produces a God-like disposition. All these strong expressions denote the *indwelling of the Divine Spirit* in the Saints; and his gracious influence upon their souls, together with those graces which are the permanent effects of his operations. There may in some moments be an interruption as to the actual exercise of particular graces, but even then the habit of them remains in the soul. A skilful musician may lay aside his instrument, and for a time may cease to think of the art in which he excels; yet the habit remains, and when called



called to it, he discovers the skill he possessed before. So a Christian is not every moment in the actual exercise of faith, repentance, and every grace; yet when there is a suspension of the act, the habit must remain.—It is this gracious principle that renders Christians *the salt of the earth*. Destitute of it, we are corrupt ourselves, and in danger of infecting others. But seasoned with it, we are qualified to promote holiness and piety in those who are around us.

3. When the heart is enriched with such a treasure, there will follow a constant and uniform course of holiness and piety, which eminently conduces to render us *the salt of the earth*. Holiness is the grand object, to which the designs and operations of God respecting his people tend. Are they *chosen by him from eternity*? It is, that they *should be holy and without blame before him in love*. Did Christ give himself for them? It was to *redeem them from all iniquity*. Are they *called and regenerated* by his Grace? It is, that they might be *conformable to Christ their Head*. In holiness consists the health and prosperity of an intelligent creature. But when sin reigns, it incapacitates a man for spiritual enjoyment, and deprives him of all the comfort which springs from fellowship with a holy God. For, *if we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth*. But *if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellow-*  
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*ship one with another.* 1 John i. 6, 7.—And this is absolutely necessary to render us *the salt of the earth*. Is there an object on the face of the earth so hateful in the sight of God, as a corrupt professor? Or is there any thing that has an equal tendency to harden men in impiety and sin? For a man to profess, that he believes and receives the great principles of the gospel; and yet to live as though he knew they were false, tends to persuade the world, that religion is nothing but knavery and hypocrisy. It should, therefore, be our grand concern, to have our lives regulated according to the pattern exhibited in the Bible. How important did this appear in the view of the Apostle. Phil. i. 27. *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ.* Other things are of importance, but this is most important. 'Tis thus alone we should evidence, that we are what we profess to be; thus may we hope, that Christ will acknowledge us as his disciples; and thus shall we contribute to the propagation of piety and holiness in the world.

4. Another thing necessary to render us *the salt of the earth*, is savoury and spiritual speech and conversation. *Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt.* Col. iv. 6. And this will naturally follow, where the soul is enriched with the sound principles of the Gospel, and under the influence of divine grace. *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man*  
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*out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things.* Mat. xii. 34. 35. Sin fills the hearts of the ungodly, whence that corrupt conversation proceeds which infects all who delight in their society. If, therefore, the spirit of God has caused a *well of living water* to spring up in our hearts, will it not naturally flow in streams of serious and edifying conversation? Doubtless, we should in this case as well as in others, be governed by the rules which wisdom and prudence dictate. But if there are times when religious conference is unseasonable, there are times also when it must be most seasonable and proper. The Prophet Malachi referring to such a season says, *Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it.* Chap. iii. 16. Can our hearts feel the influence of the great things of God, and our lips continue always silent concerning them? Is Jesus the great object of our trust and supreme affection, yet never the subject of our delightful conversation? Are we experienced in the conflicts of Christians, yet totally silent on the subject, as though the spiritual warfare did not exist? Have we tasted the peculiar comforts of religion, and yet satisfied without dropping a single word in commendation of it? This cannot be. Therefore a gracious and spiritual disposition must excite us to encourage christian and spiritual conversation. And where this is duly regulated, it will  
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tend greatly to promote real piety. It will contribute to the mutual edification and establishment of Christians in the divine life. It will have a great influence on young minds and tender consciences. And under a divine blessing, it may tend to the conviction of inconsiderate and hardened sinners.

5. To render us *the salt of the earth*, our hearts must be warmed with fervent love and christian zeal. The Gospel is a glorious manifestation of the unparalleled love of our God and Saviour; and as far as this Gospel is entertained by us, it must kindle these graces in our souls. When we contemplate the wonders of redeeming love, can we do less than love that God, in whose sovereign compassion the amazing scheme took its rise? Can we do less than love that blessed Jesus, whose love to sinners is so great? And can we avoid loving our brethren of mankind, when we see so much mercy towards them in heaven? Therefore, in proportion to our christianity, will be our love and zeal: And this Christ requires of us. For, observe how he censures the opposite spirit in the Laodiceans, Rev. iii. 15, 16. *I know thy works, that thou art neither hot nor cold: so then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.* A lukewarm spirit in professors hardens sinners, and obstructs the success of the Gospel; and therefore must be hateful to Christ. But a spirit of christian love and well regulated zeal, shews us to be sincere in  
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what



what we profess, and tends to convince others, that there is a reality in religion.

This, therefore, is that gracious favour which will render us the salt of the earth. Our minds must embrace the genuine truths of the gospel; our hearts must be enriched with a vital principle of divine grace; our walk must be holy and circumspect; our speech and conversation spiritual and savoury; and our hearts must be warmed with love and christian zeal.—It remains that we should attend to the next head.

III. The sad state and miserable doom of those professors of religion, who are destitute of this gracious favour.—It is thus expressed in the text. *But if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men.*

After what has been already said, a short hint will suffice to make up the description of an unfavoury professor. For, if professors reject the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, their religion will unavoidably degenerate into an insipid form. Especially, if they can produce no good evidence of Grace, if their walk be irregular, and their conversation earthly and unfavoury, it becomes too evident, that *the salt hath lost its savour*.—Their state and doom we may learn, by a little at-

tention to two or three particulars contained in the text.

1. *If the salt have lost its savour*, our Lord asks, *wherewith shall it be salted?* Should salt once lose its pungent quality, by what means can it be restored? It belongs to *it* alone; and no other substance can impart it.—Where are we to look for the vital savour of religion, but among those who make a profession of it? If *they*, therefore, be destitute of it, what can season *them*? If in the enjoyment of all the means of grace, they themselves are found graceless, whence can it be expected, that their state and disposition should be altered for the better? We may entertain some hopes, that the most licentious and profligate may be reclaimed, if prevailed upon to attend on the means of Grace. But the case of none is so hopeless, as of those, who under a profession of religion, and in the enjoyment of the most precious means, continue absolute strangers to the life and power of it in their own souls. Therefore, *woe unto those who are at ease in Zion!*—Our Lord adds

2. *It is thenceforth good for nothing.* The entire excellency and usefulness of salt consists in its *savour* or saltness. But should it once lose this quality, it would become totally useless and worthless, and cannot be applied to any valuable purpose whatsoever.—So the excellency and usefulness of a professor is derived from his being possessed of  
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real and vital religion. Thereby only is he capable of glorifying God, and of being serviceable to the world. But if he be destitute of this, his profession is of no value, and his character sinks beneath that of the man who makes no profession at all.—The scripture makes use of another metaphor as expressive of the church, which illustrates and confirms the point before us. In Ezek. xv. 2. the Lord asks, *What is the vine-tree more than any tree?* Merely as a tree, almost every tree excels it. Its whole excellency lies in the generous fruit which it produces. But if it yield no fruit, it is of no kind of use, unless it be for fuel.—So it may be asked, what is the man who professes religion more than any other man? If he be destitute of the fruits of Grace, to what purpose can he be applied, but that the awful severity of divine justice may be demonstrated in him?—Which leads us to the last particular in the text: viz.

3. If *the salt have lost its savour*, being of no further use, *it is cast out and trodden under foot of men*. Who would keep such an useless thing in his house? Nor will the Lord always bear with unfavourable professors in *his* house. Sometimes they are cast out by a censure drawn on themselves from the society they are connected with, on account of their unchristian conduct. Sometimes they are overwhelmed by public calamities brought upon them by the providence of God;

God; which was the case, in more than one instance, with regard to Israel, once the professed people of God. But should providence bear with them in this life, an awful scrutiny will take place hereafter, and every thing that offendeth will be separated for ever from the church of God. And on the last decisive day, the portion of no sinners will be more dreadful, than that of *hypocrites*; or of professors who satisfied themselves without the life and power of godliness.

I shall subjoin a few remarks for the improvement of this subject.

1. We may learn from what has been said, the great importance of real and vital religion. The generality seem willing to acknowledge its importance and necessity with respect to death and eternity. *Let me die the death of the righteous*, is the language of all, and no wonder; for words cannot express the misery of that man who enters into eternity, without an interest in the Saviour, without a smile from God. But such wishes can be of no avail.—For we must live as Christians, if we hope to die such—But religion is of the highest importance with respect to *this* life. Not only it advances its subjects to privileges and pleasures which sinners are strangers to; but its good effects extend to others also. Let those possess the honour due to them, who have been serviceable to the world, by the useful arts which



which they have discovered or improved, by their valour in the field, or their skill and wisdom in the cabinet ; but let us aspire to be made by divine Grace *the salt of the earth* ; which is the greatest honour that God can put upon us in this world.

2. May I be permitted to make another remark, which seems very naturally to arise from this subject ? I hope my Reverend Fathers and Brethren will not think it disrespectful or impertinent in me to mention it. — If the Power of religion be so necessary to professors, how important and indispensable is it in the Ministers of the Gospel ! They are peculiarly designed to be *the salt of the earth*. Honourably and successfully to answer the end of their calling, there are other qualifications which are very desirable, expedient, and even necessary. But the life of religion is most necessary. A professor, when destitute of this, is a wretched object. But were we to suppose a Minister to be a stranger to it ; who could view such a character without some degree of horror ? Would to God, that such a character did not exist !

3. Amidst all the occasions of mourning with which the world abounds, nothing is so much to be lamented as the decay of religion in those who profess it. Let things wear ever so alarming an aspect in the world, if religion flourishes in the church, there is a source of hope and consolation : for *the Lord is there*. And amidst all the storms which

which shake the world, *say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him.* But if the fervour of piety be lost, and religion degenerate into a form; the presence of the Lord is withdrawn. And in such a case, where is the retreat in which we may hope for safety?

4. Lastly; With what diligence should we pursue the means appointed to cherish and improve the life of godliness in our souls? Our own best interest requires it; and the benevolence we owe to mankind demands it of us. Let us, therefore, *awake and trim our lamps.* Let us narrowly examine into the state of religion in our own souls. Let us be constant in our attendance on all the means of Grace. And above all, let us earnestly pray, that the Lord may abundantly supply our souls with his Grace. Thus may we become *the salt of the earth!* And when our mortal life is ended, the Lord will acknowledge us as his own, and admit us to his beatific presence.

T H E E N D.





